

*Stansfield Turner
and George Thibault*

PREPARING FOR THE UNEXPECTED: THE NEED FOR A NEW MILITARY STRATEGY

The U.S. military establishment is at a historic turning point. It can continue with the same strategy that has dominated its thinking, training and procurement for the past 32 years. That is a concept of prepared defenses and predeployed forces in Europe and in Korea, along with forward-deployed naval forces, on the assumption that being ready for those requirements will automatically be adequate for whatever other contingencies may arise.

Alternatively, it can recognize that the world has changed since the late 1940s, and take those changes into account by revising its strategy through placing more emphasis on the flexibility needed to move forces to wherever the United States may require them. Such a strategy would call for greater stress on our capabilities to use the seas and be prepared for unexpected military contingencies, rather than just for the clearly defined problems of defending Europe and Korea.

The Reagan Administration has declared that it wants naval superiority and that it wants to accelerate the Rapid Deployment Force that has been building for more than two years. It has directed an abrupt shift in defense resources to these ends. The Navy will, for instance, take the largest share of the next defense budget if the Congress agrees.

Still, one does not get the feeling that a serious debate is taking place or that an express decision to reorient our military strategy has been made. Instead, we see clear indicators of strong resistance to any shift in strategy: from those elements of the military that would have to change most and their supporters in Congress; from defense contractors who build the equipment we have been using for years and whose interests might be adversely affected; and from traditional Atlanticists who abjure any tampering with our long-established security relationship with Europe.

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II

Foreign Affairs has just published a strong argument against change by Ambassador Robert Komer that typifies the resistance of Atlanticists.¹ Mr. Komer argues for a "coalition" strategy which places primary reliance on working closely with our allies to build a common defense for Europe and Korea and for any other areas where we have vital interests on the periphery of the Eurasian land mass. He acknowledges that our present coalition strategy is not working well enough and suggests a program of "rejuvenation" that would call for the allies to carry a greater share of the defense burden and to effect numerous efficiencies. He recognizes as well that sea control is indispensable to all of our overseas military activities.

What he resists is a shift to a "maritime strategy" that would go beyond controlling the seas and would use the seas to project power against the Soviet Union. Here he is on solid ground and is justifiably concerned. One use of maritime power under this concept would be attacks by aircraft or missiles from ships directly onto the Soviet homeland. Another use would be "horizontal escalations" or attacks on Soviet interests outside the homeland, e.g., their merchant marine, Cuba or South Yemen. This concept of a maritime strategy worries him because he does not see the Navy's ability to inflict damage on the Soviet Union by either form of attack as being significant enough to warrant diverting resources from the Army and Air Force, as is already called for in the President's defense program—a trend he sees as likely to be intensified in the light of future political pressures to limit overall military spending.

The maritime strategy Mr. Komer describes is not a maritime strategy that would be useful for the United States today or in the future. Yet, it is easy to see how he could interpret the term in this way. What he criticizes is, in fact, the direction that the U.S. Navy is moving under the Administration's defense program. Quite simply, the Navy is asking to do more of what it has done so well ever since World War II, projecting power onto hostile shores with aircraft based on aircraft carriers. A continuation or expansion of such a strategy, however, is not adequate: today's needs for our Navy are much broader and more in line with a traditional maritime strategy where control of the sea lanes and of the air lanes above them is a primary focus.

Why do we need to pay more attention to our use of the seas

¹ Robert W. Komer, "Maritime Strategy vs. Coalition Defense," *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1982, pp. 1124-44.

and the air? It is because the shortcomings of our traditional coalition approach to military strategy are becoming more and more apparent. On the one hand, the coalition approach has not prevented the balance of military power in Europe from continuing to shift against NATO. On the other hand, the United States has consistently failed to meet its military requirements in other areas of the world. If we look back at the only uses of U.S. military forces in combat since World War II, we can hardly be proud. Korea was perhaps a tie; Vietnam a loss; the *Mayaguez* and the Iranian hostage operations disasters. It is difficult to believe that the degree to which Europe has dominated our procurement of equipment, doctrine and training did not contribute heavily to our shortcomings in these quite different environments and quite different tactical situations.

Since 1980, we have had an express national policy of overcoming these deficiencies, at least for the Persian Gulf area. Yet two and a half years later we are still woefully short of being ready to field a Rapid Deployment Force for Persian Gulf contingencies. Do we not owe it to ourselves to ask whether a different strategy might not enable us to be ready for unexpected contingencies in the Third World while still making our proportionate contribution to the coalition effort in Europe?

Flexibility for Third World contingencies would certainly mean a greater emphasis on our maritime capabilities. Being able to move on and over the seas is the *sine qua non* for moving all forms of U.S. military power to wherever they are required. The question is whether we can afford such flexibility without imperiling the programs that presently support our defense of Europe and Korea. The answer, in a word, is "yes" if we reorient the U.S. Navy to an appropriate maritime strategy. The first step in verifying this conclusion is to analyze what it would take to develop an adequate capability for sea control.

Sea control is the capability to use the seas when we need and want to, i.e., to be able to move forces and merchant shipping and aircraft across the seas at the times and to the places that we find necessary. It is not well recognized that improving our sea control capability is essential to even our present strategy of fixed coalition defenses; it is here that the Navy can make its most significant contribution to any conflict in which the United States may become involved.

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Second, it has been popular to wish the problem of controlling the Atlantic sea lanes away on the grounds that any war in Europe would be short. The argument is that a conventional war in Europe would either escalate into a nuclear war quickly or be terminated for fear that it would go nuclear. By this reasoning, since we would need to provide supplies and reinforcement by sea only in a prolonged conflict, sea control is no longer important in a European war. However, we have made it clear to our European allies that we do not intend to fire intercontinental nuclear weapons from the United States at Moscow as an automatic response to a conventional attack against NATO. Europeans have likewise made it clear that they would not endorse a response that involved only the use of shorter range nuclear weapons inside Europe. Would the Soviets initiate the use of nuclear weapons if they were winning on the conventional battlefield? Consequently, if a conventional war in Europe should grind to a stalemate, there might be neither the will nor the incentive on either side to resort to nuclear weapons. In any event, it would be foolish to count on a short war when we have two historical examples of long wars in which control of the Atlantic sea lanes became vital.

Sea control takes on added importance in a more maritime strategy where preparing for intervention in the Third World against opponents other than the Soviet Union is important. We have only to look at how different the recent experience of the British in fighting Argentina was from our experiences in Korea and in Vietnam. There we were able to utilize our big aircraft carriers close to enemy shore lines with impunity, because the enemy had very limited capability to challenge us. Today even a few Exocet missiles, such as the Argentines employed in the sinking of HMS *Sheffield*, would give an adversary adequate capability to attempt an attack.

One lesson of the *Sheffield* is that navies should distribute their power and value over as many ships as possible, rather than concentrating them in just a few. Advocates of large carriers have distorted this issue by pointing out that a large U.S. carrier would have performed better than did the small British carriers in the Falklands situation. This is an oversimplification. The British designed their small carriers specifically for the role of sea control in the North Atlantic, on the assumption that land-based aircraft from the United Kingdom would provide the necessary long-range air reconnaissance for the carriers. They could have devel-

oped radar surveillance and other defensive aircraft suitable for their small carriers if they had designed their carriers against a different set of assumptions. Beyond that, since any new U.S. carriers purchased today will not be delivered for seven to ten years and would be expected to serve in the fleet another 30 or more years thereafter, the questions we must ask are whether we expect that such ships will be needed and useful that long, and whether there are better alternatives.

What makes prolonged usefulness of these large carriers seem doubtful is the amount of attention they will attract in any conflict at sea. The two nuclear-powered aircraft carriers which the Administration has requested in the next budget cost \$3.4 billion each, exclusive of aircraft. The value of each is about seven times the average value of all the other ships in the same budget. Under these circumstances, an enemy is almost bound to seek out and attack these high-value ships. What's more, because of this concentration of value and offensive capability, if a naval task force were denuded of its carriers today, it would have no offensive striking power left. For simple survival our naval power must be distributed over more ships.

The key argument against this is that large carriers are needed to be able to venture close enough to the Soviet Union to launch attacks on it. Attacks on Soviet ports and airfields are advertised as the best way to gain sea control. The idea is to bottle up and destroy the Soviet navy and its air arm right at home. This tactic would require sending a force of aircraft carriers and attendant supporting ships straight toward the principal Soviet naval base complexes.

It is hard to believe that thoughtful military planners would actually do this. With modern reconnaissance techniques, such a major force would be detected long before it arrived within striking range of a Soviet base. The Soviets would have time to minimize their forces left in port or on airfields and to put the rest on full alert. By the time the carriers were within 1,600 miles of Soviet air bases, they would be within range of over 90 percent of the U.S.S.R.'s land-based bombers. Yet, the Soviet bases would still be over 1,000 miles beyond the range of carrier aircraft.

Traveling at 25 knots for those last 1,000 miles, the carrier force would be subject to Soviet air bombardment for nearly two days before it was close enough to strike Soviet bases. The force would also be subject to attack by submarines and surface ships with long-range missiles that would have been deployed along the route. In short, we would be fighting the Soviets on their turf at

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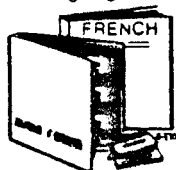
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times and places of their choosing, well before we could assume the offensive.

At a point 400 to 500 miles from the Soviet bases, the carriers could finally launch an attack with whatever aircraft were left after two days of Soviet attacks. (Here one must also note the inexorable trend in the last few years to fewer attack aircraft on our carriers, as the need for defensive and support aircraft—such as early warning, antisubmarine and tankers—has increased.) Most Soviet ships and aircraft would have left their bases or airfields when they received warning of the approach of the carriers. Thus, if the carriers wanted to destroy them, the carriers would have to remain in that exposed position and continue attacking long enough to catch the ships and planes that come and go as they require repair, replenishment or refueling—a considerable period of time. Unless nuclear weapons were used, even the attacks on base and airfield facilities would have to be repeated as repairs were made. With the carrier task force in a forward position long enough to do the job correctly, the chance of losing part, if not all of it, would be high simply because the trends of technology give the attacker who employs the new stand-off weapons like Exocet a considerable advantage today.

The loss of three or four of the Navy's 12 to 13 carriers, in what would have to be a gamble to suppress the Soviet Navy in this manner, would be a major catastrophe. No President could possibly permit the Navy to attempt such a high risk effort. There simply would be inadequate fallback forces to handle other threats, especially to the North Atlantic sea lanes.

These trends are what place a high premium on having numbers of ships. Sea control is ultimately a war of attrition and losses are inevitable. There is nothing unusual about this. We anticipate attrition in tank warfare and in air warfare all the time. We cannot afford as high attrition in ships because they are more expensive, but we must expect some. The tactics of defense at sea favor smaller ships. The smaller the target, the more difficult for the enemy to detect, identify and home a weapon onto it. Telltale signatures increase with size. A large ship offers a large radar return, puts off more heat, disturbs the earth's magnetic field more, and is more visible than a small ship. Ships whose signatures stand out from others in almost any dimension are more likely to be singled out by homing weapons. In the sea battles around the Falklands, the Argentine Air Force appears to have sunk a British supply ship when it intended to attack one of the two small carriers nearby. Here the fact that the carrier was similar in size

to the merchant ship, rather than much larger, may have saved the carrier.

The counterclaim is that a 100,000-ton aircraft carrier can be protected with various layers of tanks, watertight compartments and other protective measures. What is not mentioned is that our damage predictions today have not yet taken into account the shift from ordinary bombs to the more lethal weapons such as that which sank HMS *Sheffield*, wherein fire damage was more significant than the traditional explosions. Advances in the accuracy and lethality of modern weapons are certain to make traditional protective measures less and less successful. Considering the *Sheffield* and what a single missile did to it, one has to think of how many more inflammable and explosive vulnerable points there are on a carrier than on a destroyer. The approach of treating our carriers as though they can be made invulnerable is reminiscent of the unsuccessful efforts prior to World War II to protect our battleships by ringing them with more and more layers of steel.

All this is not intended to obscure the fact that carriers are critical to exercising sea control. The only argument is whether they need be super carriers. Plentiful air power at sea is one of the cardinal requirements of good sea control tactics. Aircraft are the best counter to the increasing ranges from which an enemy can attack ships. Aircraft at high altitude can extend the range of a ship's radars and other sensors to provide earlier warning of an impending attack by ships, submarines or aircraft. Satellites and land-based aircraft can help, too, but the commander at sea needs organic tactical reconnaissance as well. Further, aircraft at sea can reach out quickly to attack an aircraft, ship or submarine which is on the verge of launching an attack with long-range missiles. Ships are far too slow to do this.

The key reason for having large carriers is to accommodate large, high-performance aircraft. The trends of technology are driving us away from such aircraft and as a consequence will permit us to move the necessary air capability onto smaller ships. For instance, the Navy is already pointed in this direction with its F-14 air defense aircraft. The F-14 has good maneuverability for aerial combat at close quarters. It also has a radar and missile system that permit it to attack an enemy aircraft, and to a lesser degree missiles, 60 miles away or more. Clearly you do not need to be able to dogfight if you are going to attack from a distance of 60 miles.

The day of the missile in such engagements is just beginning.

They will soon dominate the air battlefields, even in the rare instance when aircraft may find themselves engaging at dogfight ranges. Thus, the F-14's successor could well be an aircraft with only modest speed and maneuverability, but a superior missile system. Such an aircraft could be based on a carrier one-third the size of present carriers, and even smaller.

III

If large aircraft carriers are not appropriate to the sea control mission, what about the other missions within a maritime strategy? The next mission in a maritime strategy would be to build a greater capability to intervene with force in unexpected and remote areas. We did not anticipate using our forces in Korea, Vietnam, the Gulf of Thailand (the *Mayaguez*) or Iran (the hostage rescue effort). Today we are concerned with the Persian Gulf and southwest Asia in general. We would be rash to think that we can forecast where our national interests will be challenged next. Instead we must build in flexibility for the unexpected.

Because of this uncertainty as to where we may need to intervene in the future, one of the cardinal points of maritime strategy must be capability for forcible entry. There may be instances when we would be welcomed, as in response to a local government's request for support against external aggression. It is difficult to believe, though, that we would want only to be capable of intervening in such favorable circumstances. Presumably, we will not consider any intervention unless vital national interests are at stake. Therefore our intervention capability must be able to stand on its own.

The only way to make a significant forcible entry without reliance on bases in the general vicinity is from the sea. Without assurance of friendly air and land bases, international waters provide the only available staging area. Only if we have adequate amphibious assault capability, then, can our intervention potential stand on its own. With the size of our amphibious forces today and the likelihood that we will not have time to converge them all at the scene of a given contingency, the best we can hope for from our amphibious forces is that they be able to seize a point of entry for follow-on forces. We must be able to reinforce an amphibious landing rapidly by airlift from the United States, or from U.S. forces in Europe.

This concept of following up an amphibious entry with airlifted forces requires a substantial shift in U.S. Marine Corps doctrine. Rather than the traditional, large-scale amphibious assault with

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wave after wave from the sea, the Marines would be tasked to conduct smaller, rapier-thrust operations expressly to open the door for the Army and Air Force. The objective would be for the Marines to establish just enough of a foothold ashore to permit immediate insertion of airlifted ground forces and land-based air forces. Consequently, our amphibious forces should be reshaped into integral packages of naval ships and Marine Corps troops to support battalion landing teams of about 1,800 to 2,000 men. The concept should be one of having many of these units and then aggregating them for larger requirements. This is almost the opposite of the present concept of readying three division-size amphibious forces and scaling them down in size for smaller contingencies.

We would also need to take steps to minimize the vulnerability of amphibious forces during the difficult period of offloading troops and supplies across the beach. During the amphibious phase in the Falklands, the British lost three warships to air attacks even though the Argentine Air Force was unable to sustain a high level of effort. There is an urgent need to reduce the time required for offloading because that is when amphibious ships are most vulnerable. Accelerated procurement of Hovercraft-type landing craft that travel at very high speed is one possible step; improving the techniques of offloading without the ships ever stopping or anchoring is another. Most of all, though, the Falklands experience reminds us that good air support is essential to amphibious operations.

That brings us back to the question of large vs. small carriers. As noted with regard to sea control, there is not an overwhelming requirement for large carriers to perform the air superiority role. Much the same applies with respect to the bombing support which aircraft must provide to amphibious assaults by attacking airfields, troop and tank concentrations, beach defenses, etc. Even against Third World powers, let alone the Soviet Union, attacks by manned aircraft against such targets are becoming less and less likely. Attrition rates when modern air defense weapons are properly employed can be very high. The Israelis recently destroyed Syrian air defense batteries in devastating fashion, but it would not be wise to assume that we would always have the marked advantages of skill, training and equipment that they enjoyed.

The fact is that the vulnerability of manned aircraft in penetrating anti-air defenses is going up more rapidly than the countermeasures which such aircraft can employ. Fortuitously, however, the need for a man in the aircraft is decreasing and un-

manned missiles will be able to penetrate defenses much more successfully. We already have superlative remote sensing capabilities for detecting the targets we want to attack. We could, for instance, place an unmanned reconnaissance drone over a battlefield and collect far more data than a pilot and his bombardier could possibly absorb. Alternatively, weapons themselves can carry televisions and other sensors and send back data as they attack. The wonders of modern microprocessing will permit us to digest and then transmit such data almost anywhere.

In short, we can keep track of an enemy target even if it moves, and can guide a missile right to it from long range with high accuracy. Substituting an unmanned missile for a manned aircraft in the terminal phase of an attack permits us to buy simpler and lighter aircraft for use on our carriers. The aircraft's task would be to carry the weapons to the perimeter of the threat area and then launch them into the targets. The day need not be far off when such aircraft can be launched from ships that are smaller than small carriers, and this would permit distributing the Navy's air striking power over even a much wider number of platforms.

If such aircraft are not in being today, it is because we are in the situation of which came first, the chicken or the egg. On the one hand there has been resistance to the small carrier because the new short-takeoff and vertical-takeoff aircraft types needed on them are not yet available. On the other hand, the funding for the development of such aircraft has been miniscule because there are no ships which need them. With the seven- to ten-year lead time for building new carriers, we should easily be able to outfit small carriers with most of the appropriate aircraft. It will probably be necessary, though, to build our first small carriers large enough to have catapults and arresting gear and thus be able to handle today's lower performance aircraft until their successors with vertical-takeoff capabilities arrive.

Spreading the Navy's striking power over more ships would help avoid a problem of the past. History shows that military commanders in the field have a tendency to back away from opportunities if the odds of winning are not very high and the consequences of defeat would be high.² This tendency has already

² The battle of Jutland in World War I, while indecisive for more than a single reason, is one example. Both the British and the German admirals, not realizing at that point in the war that the decisive naval battles would be fought for the use of the Atlantic and not for the decimation of the other's fleet, engaged each other rather halfheartedly. Each had the better part of his battleships on the scene, saw the consequences of losing them as being severe, and thus was extremely judicious about exposing them. Each risked little and each accomplished little.

beset a U.S. Navy whose fighting power is concentrated in its few large carriers. It would be difficult to deny the Navy's recent lack of willingness to volunteer to risk its key ships in forward positions, such as the Persian Gulf, during situations of tension.

Further, when we look at the potential of nuclear weapons at sea, we have to take vulnerability of small numbers very seriously. In fact, naval tacticians think very little about nuclear weapons at sea, probably because the consequences are so unthinkable. There is no easy answer to the nuclear prospect. Small carriers are just as vulnerable to a nuclear weapon as large ones, perhaps slightly more, but their advantage is that if there were more of them it would be more difficult to take them all out, except by a massive worldwide strategic attack.

IV

Small aircraft carriers are more appropriate, then, for both the sea control and the intervention missions. Yet carriers and amphibious forces cannot, as has been pointed out, meet all of the intervention requirements by themselves. Thus, a major element in the new strategy should be to retrain and re-equip the Army and Air Force with the flexibility for worldwide intervention in mind, rather than just the static defense of Europe and Korea.

Increased airlift is the prime requirement. That means more cargo aircraft. It also means lighter and smaller types of equipment to make any number of cargo aircraft go farther. Lighter combat equipment is necessary also to be ready to operate on a wide variety of terrains. The heavy equipment we have built for the plains of Europe will not do well in some jungle or mountainous areas. All of this calls for nothing less than a new mentality and new doctrine for ground forces and land-based air forces.

There is a lot of serious discussion today by people like Senators Sam Nunn and Gary Hart to the effect that accenting maneuverability with lighter tanks, artillery, etc., with the accuracy and effectiveness of new lighter weapons, could actually improve our European defense posture. Whether or not this is so, a reordering of U.S. ground and air forces in Europe toward mobility need not weaken NATO's defensive posture. If heavy forces continue to be required, more of this element of forward defense in Europe will have to fall on the shoulders of our allies. The U.S. contribution would shift more to one of being a mobile reserve to move into gaps or toward areas of heaviest attack. That would include an improved capability to bring reinforcements into Europe from the United States, or wherever, since our forces would be tailored to mobility.

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The obvious and genuine concern of people like Mr. Komer is that these three shifts—toward sea control, amphibious projection and more mobile follow-on ground and air forces—will decrease our readiness in Europe, either by making our allies feel that we are no longer concerned with their security, or by drawing away so many resources that the U.S. contribution will be weakened unacceptably. Neither need be the case.

Obtaining allied acceptance of a shift in responsibilities would not be easy. However, even a continuation of a "coalition" strategy for Europe faces almost identical problems. Mr. Komer calls on the allies both to contribute more to the common defense and to suppress their nationalism by pooling weapons procurement so as to reduce costs. Both of these objectives have been urged on the allies for years with little result. There is no reason to think that the coalition strategists are likely to be any more successful today in spurring the allies on.

For 32 years NATO has had a much larger economic capacity than the Warsaw Pact and an even larger population, but it has steadily fallen behind in military preparedness, despite what is still a disproportionate U.S. contribution. As long as the allies continue to believe that one way or another we will carry at least as much of the load as we now do, they are unlikely to do more themselves. Our declaring an intent to shift over time to a maritime strategy, of the kind proposed here, could provide the impetus to the Europeans to take their responsibilities more seriously. Surely they do appreciate the dire threat to them of a cutoff in their supplies of oil from the Middle East. As we go about assuming the military responsibilities of the entire Alliance for the Middle East, they should understand that an adjustment in our contribution in Europe will be necessary. If they are unwilling to make up the difference in these circumstances, we are unlikely to be able to persuade them to do so by any other devices.

There is, of course, the possibility that the Europeans will not cooperate with either a maritime or a coalition strategy, so that the Alliance will gradually disintegrate. If so, a coalition strategy would be meaningless and we would have to rely entirely on a maritime strategy. Let us hope that we will not be forced into such a move. Moving now, gradually but deliberately, toward a maritime strategy would be the best insurance we could take against this eventuality.

The second concern about a maritime strategy, that it might draw down resources for the Army and Air Force unacceptably,

is not well founded. It is the kind of defensive argument that is raised within the Pentagon bureaucracy whenever it appears that one of the Services may gain a percentage point or two of the budget at the expense of the others; the cataclysmic impact on the others is always exaggerated. What a shame it would be if a sounder military strategy for the nation were precluded because we cannot overcome the bureaucratic inertia that opposes shifting the allocation of resources between the Services even a point or two!

It is true that adopting a maritime strategy would require a shift of resources toward the Navy in order to make up for our present deficiencies in sea control capabilities and to broaden our intervention capabilities beyond Europe and Korea. Substantial increases are already planned for the Navy, but for a Navy built around 15 large carriers intended for power projection by tactical air power. Changing to a true maritime strategy, stressing sea control and the other missions described here, would not cost any more and would offer some compensating offsets.

Within the Navy itself, a larger number of smaller carriers probably would not present any savings, and might even cost somewhat more because of additional operating costs for manpower, fuel, etc. The larger number of small carriers, however, would carry fewer attack aircraft than would the smaller number of large carriers. This would save money, and is an acceptable trade-off since the missions of this strategy would place less emphasis on air attacks into heavy defenses. The primary saving in the new strategy, however, would come from not buying highly sophisticated aircraft to deliver highly sophisticated stand-off weapons, and from a gradual shift to less expensive aircraft for both the Navy and the Air Force. Similarly, emphasis on lighter tanks and similar Army equipment could result in savings also.

The key point is that there will be pluses and minuses all across the board. The financial adjustments will be no easier to make than the strategic ones, but there is no *prima facie* case that the costs should rule out this new strategy. Ambassador Komer premised his case against a maritime strategy on the assumption that the cost of a new Navy would in time starve the other Services. His analysis may have been correct for the type of Navy required for a maritime strategy built around a few super carriers for projecting power. That need not be the case with a true maritime strategy, built around many smaller ships for exercising sea control and spearheading interventions, and that also takes advantage of modern technology.

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Another point important to remember is that none of these changes need be, nor in fact can be, precipitate. It would take years to shift the Navy from large carriers to small, to restructure the Marines and to obtain more air and sea lift. We will have large carriers, for example, as the backbone of the fleet well into the next century even if we build no more. We will go through a considerable transition period in which large carriers and smaller air capable platforms will have to complement each other. This necessary transition period is also a hedge against the needed technologies not developing as well or as fast as anticipated, though these technologies are all in sight already. The same kind of transition period would be needed for the Army and Air Force.

What must come quite quickly, though, is a willingness at the highest level in the U.S. military to look at the security needs of the United States with an open mind, uninfluenced by loyalties to military service or branches of services and unfettered by conventional solutions. Military doctrine and training must be critically examined in the light of the very different world which exists today than existed when virtually all of our present major weapons systems, platforms and doctrine were conceived, 20 or more years ago. It is only with such a change in attitude that an improved understanding will come of how to use existing equipment better and when new equipment is needed to fulfill our intervention responsibilities while still maintaining our obligations in Europe and Korea.

The single security threat that brought the Alliance together has now been fragmented by the prism of arms proliferation, the rising expectations of nationalism, and the realization that even the smallest countries in the Third World can play a major role in world events. The United States has always built its military forces to counter the Soviet threat, assuming that the same military forces would be able to handle lesser problems as well. Today they can do neither. Tomorrow, with a maritime strategy, they would be able to do both.